

ABSTRACT OF CAPSTONE

Charles Holloway

The Graduate School

Morehead State University

February 26, 2018

AFRICAN AMERICAN MALES' PERSISTENCE IN ATTENDING COLLEGE

Abstract of Capstone

A capstone submitted in partial fulfillment of the
Requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education in the
College of Education
At Morehead State University

By

Charles Holloway

Lexington, Kentucky

Committee Chair: Daryl R. Privott, Ph.D., Assistant Professor

Morehead, Kentucky

February 26, 2018

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AFRICAN AMERICAN MALES' PERSISTENCE IN ATTENDING COLLEGE

In the United States, African American males face numerous societal challenges including discrimination, high rates of unemployment, mass incarceration, poverty, and lack of access to mental and physical health services (Gee, Ryan, Laflamme, & Holt, 2006). Some other factors are institutionalized, systemic schooling inequities, such as tracking standardized test scores, and tracking, or assigning African American males to classrooms where lower-academic achievement is expected (Mitchell & Stewart, 2012). These societal challenges impede upward mobility and success. One way to achieve success is to obtain a college education because it provides an avenue for individuals to gain skills and competencies that combat societal challenges and improve life outcomes (OECD, 2008). Scholars, educators, and policymakers concerned with the status of African American males focus on college participation and the experiences of African American males in post-secondary settings. In the past, few opportunities existed for African Americans to obtain an education outside of historically black colleges and/or universities (HBCU). Beginning in the 1960's, predominantly white institutions (PWIs) opened their doors to African American students providing additional options for selecting an institution of higher learning. Despite this increased access to higher education, African American males do not experience comparable rates of degree attainment success when compared to White males.

Social and cultural factors affect African American male students in their pursuit of a college degree. The purpose of this study is to identify social and academic factors that contribute to African American males' persistence at a predominantly white institution.

KEYWORDS: African American males, diversity, persistence, retention, graduation, AAMT (African American Male Theory)

Candidate Signature

Date

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By

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DEDICATION

This capstone is dedicated to my parents, Carl and Johnette Holloway, and those individuals I have had an opportunity to mentor. You have assisted me in becoming the man that I am and have impacted my life. I extend my greatest appreciation.

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I would like to thank my committee chair, Dr. Daryl R. Privott. You have supported me; I appreciate the knowledge that you have shared with me. Thank you for your encouragement. Dr. Fujuan Tan, I am grateful for all you have done for me. Your dedication to higher education and social justice aligns with those things I would like to improve in the world and this society. Thank you for teaching me and encouraging me to look at higher education from an international perspective. Dr. Clarendia Phillips, your presence in my life has been vital; you have held me accountable and have impelled me to write, and write, and write. I treasure your insight into life and your knowledge of higher education, which, along with your smile, inspires others to continue. In addition to the aforementioned fine people, I would like to thank Dr. Jeannie Justice and Dr. John Curry. Your support, advice and classes have helped me grow as a student and as a person.

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enjoyed learning, and to you, Mrs. Jackson, I offer my deepest gratitude. It takes a village to raise a child and I would like to thank my Moak Street, Brookhaven, Alcorn, and Alpha families for your love and support. Thank you Mrs. Donna Calvert and Minister Toni Johnson for all the reading I had you doing. Dr. Elmira Ratliff, you have truly been awesome and I truly appreciate you.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Chapter 1: Introduction/Executive Summary.....	13
Chapter 2: Review of Literature.....	26
Chapter 3: Methodology.....	45
Chapter 4: Findings	54
Chapter 5: Conclusions, Actions, and Implications.....	64
References.....	75
Attachment(s).....	86
Vita	91

Chapter 1

Introduction/Executive Summary

In *America's Divided Recovery: College Haves and Have-Nots 2016*, the authors state individuals with a graduate degree acquired 3.8 million jobs, bachelor's degree holders acquired 4.6 million jobs, and associate's degree holders attained 3.1 million jobs, compared to workers with a high school diploma or less who only acquired 80,000 jobs (Carnevale, Jayasundera, & Gulish, 2016). For workers to be competitive in the 21st century labor market, acquiring a college degree is important (Carnevale, Jayasundera, & Gulish, 2016). Furthermore, possessing a college degree can economically improve an individual's family dynamics. Formal education is recognized for the positive life outcomes that it creates. Although formal education has been an ordinary right extended to some segments of our society, it has also been a privilege that not all could access. African Americans have not always had an opportunity to receive a formal education; African American males have not had equal opportunities. Although African American males can access higher education today, their college completion rates have not been as strong as their White counterparts. Between 1995 and 2015, White students' completion rates for a bachelor's degree increased to 43 percent, which was a gain of 14 percentage points (NCES, IES, U.S. Department of Education, 2016). Completion rates among African American students was up six percentage points from 15 percent to 21 percent (NCES, IES, U.S. Department of Education, 2016). The completion rates for Hispanic students increased from nine percent to 16 percent, and Asian and Pacific

Islanders students led all groups increasing from 43 percent to 63 percent (NCES, IES, U.S. Department of Education, 2016).

The college attendance rate of African American students increased 73 percent from 1.5 million to 2.7 million between 2000 and 2010; however, between 2010 and 2015 the attendance rate decreased by 14 percent. The number decreased to 2.4 million students (NCES, IES, U.S. Department of Education, 2016). Although African American students have more school choices for their educational experiences, they have faced a history of struggles while trying to acquire or obtain an education in the United States. In order to combat legal discrimination, organizations were created to assist African Americans transition after slavery had ended, and legislative laws and practices were put in place to protect the rights of African Americans (Stubblefield & Keane, 1994). The scope of this capstone is to address the factors that assisted African American males in their persistence at a PWI.

African American Males

Universities face the double challenge of recruiting and retaining students (Lau, 2003). Even when universities are successful in recruiting African American males, they are not as successful in retaining and graduating them. Retention and graduation rates are led by White females followed by White males, African American females, and then African American males. African American males are enrolling in college, but their persistence to graduation decreases significantly when compared to other groups of students (Musu-Gillette, Robinson, McFarland, KewalRamani, Zhang, & Wilkinson-Flicker, 2016). Graduation rates were 65% for

White females, 62% for White males, 45% for African American females, and 35% for African American males. (Musu-Gillette, Robinson, McFarland, KewalRamani, Zhang, & Wilkinson-Flicker, 2016). Given the social and economic issues facing African American males in the United States, some experience microaggression and racism.

Having to deal with microaggression and racism, African American males are faced with challenges that affect them academically. African American males are less likely to complete high school, and those who matriculate to college are not as academically prepared, and less likely to graduate within six years as compared to other college populations. In 2008, only 47 percent of African American males graduated from high school in four years compared to 78 percent of their White counterparts (NCES, IES, U.S. Department of Education, 2016).

In 2002, African American males comprised only 4.3 percent of the males enrolled in higher education, which was the same percentage in 1976 (Harper, 2012). Moreover, African American male completion rates are lower than all female groups and the lowest among all racial and ethnic groups in the United States (Harper, 2012). The six-year graduation rate for African American males attending public colleges and universities (2008 starting cohort) was 35.4 percent compared to 58.2 percent for White males, 47.3 percent for Hispanic males, 65.6 percent for Asian/Pacific Islanders, and 37.9 percent for American Indian/Alaska Native males 48.1 percent across four cohorts of undergraduates that participated in the research (NCES, IES, U.S. Department of Education, 2016).

Even after obtaining a college degree, African American males still face lower employment rates compared to their White counterparts, which affects their earning potential (McDaniel, DiPrete, Buchmann, & Shwed, 2011). African American males earn 73 percent of the income of their White counterparts, with the average college-educated African American male earning less than the average White male with a high school diploma (Jenkins, 2006; Patten, 2016). Hence, earning a college degree may lessen the inequality, but does not eliminate it. For some African American males dealing with inequality, microaggression and racism may influence their identity development.

A sense of identity is important as it allows one to stand out rather than just be a part of a group. Individuals socialize by their environments, and there are different cultures, events, and beliefs celebrated within each environment. As it relates to identity, some judge another group by what they perceive or expect as the identity. At times, a person may be willing to forgo their sense of identity to fit in with others and the environment (Miville, Constantine, Baysden, & So-Lloyd, 2005).

Environment

Retention studies of students at all institutions have shown that student-faculty contact has a positive effect on students' academic growth, especially during the sophomore year (Kim & Conrad, 2006). In 1980, the percentage of African American faculty at all institutions of higher education was 4.3 percent (Harvey, Harvey, & King, 2004). In 2000, the number of African American faculty rose to 5.1 percent; this statistic included HBCUs with the percentage at PWIs as low as three percent

(Grier-Reed, Arcinue, & Inman, 2015; Harvey, Harvey, & King, 2004). About five percent of all full-time faculty members in the United States are African American (Journal of Blacks in Higher Education, 2017).

Some PWI's have been successful with the retention and graduation of African American students; however, many more have not been successful. When there is a nurturing environment for African American students, there is a positive impact on their retention and graduation. When students feel unwelcome, it can affect graduation rates (Journal of Blacks in Higher Education, 2016). Geographic location of the college plays a part as well. Schools that are in rural areas with a small black population have low retention rates compared to colleges that are in urban areas (Journal of Blacks in Higher Education, 2016).

To improve retention rates, some schools have developed mentoring programs and have orientation in place to assist students in adapting to the environment of a PWI (Journal of Blacks in Higher Education, 2016). The resources that are provided at a PWI may be different than the resources at an HBCU. Although the family and institutional resources are not adequate, HBCUs make up for the lack of resources by providing a better collegiate and supportive learning environment (Grier-Reed, Arcinue, & Inman, 2015). As a result, the retention and graduation rates are higher at HBCUs than at PWIs (Grier-Reed, Arcinue, & Inman, 2015). The graduation rate at HBCUs is 37.8 percent while at PWI's the graduation rate is 32.0 percent (Haycock, Pilar, Dealy, Trust, & Cabrales, 2017).

Campus Overview

Morehead State University is a regional, public higher education institution with a 22-county service region; the institution primarily serves rural counties. The university offers 141 undergraduate programs, including 10 associate level degrees and 13 pre-professional programs in four colleges – Caudill College of Arts, Humanities, & Social Sciences, College of Business & Technology, College of Education, and College of Science. The university also offers 73 graduate programs. The top five undergraduate majors are social work, biomedical sciences, business, nursing, and elementary education. The program of distinction is the Earth Space Science program, one of five in the United States (Morehead, 2017). The university has awarded more than 64,000 degrees since it opened its doors in 1887 (Morehead State University Profile 2015-2016 Book).

Morehead State University is in the southern region of the United States and employs over 1,100 faculty and staff. Enrollment for fall 2015 was 10,875 students, enrolling 1,461 first-time freshmen. In the fall 2015 freshmen cohort, there were 189 underrepresented minorities, of which 52 were African American. Underrepresented students made up 6.9 percent ($n = 706$) of the entire student body; African Americans made up 3.4 percent ($n = 378$) of the entire student body. Many students are first generation college students residing in the institution's service region (Morehead State University Profile 2015-2016 Book).

The campus is in the foothills of the Daniel Boone National Forest; sitting on approximately 500 acres with more than 50 major structures with a replacement value

of approximately \$150 million. Housing facilities include space for approximately 2,600 students in multiple types of housing styles, including traditional residence halls, suites and campus apartments. The instructional plant includes more than 120 classrooms and 112 laboratories (Morehead State University Profile 2015-2016 Book).

The research site operates on an annual budget of \$157.8 million dollars. The two primary sources of funding are tuition and fee revenue and state appropriations. The institution relies on tuition and fees for 54.7 percent of its revenues and 31.7 percent through state appropriations. Additionally, external grants and contracts generate approximately \$15 million per year for the institution (Morehead State University Profile 2015-2016 Book).

The institution is governed by an 11-member Board of Regents, which includes eight citizens appointed by the Governor and three seats held by elected faculty, staff, and students. Leadership of the institution is comprised primarily of four divisions – Academic Affairs; Administration and Fiscal Services; Student Success; and University Advancement – each led by a vice president (Morehead State University Profile 2015-2016 Book).

The University has 16 sponsored intercollegiate sports for men and women, and participates in the Ohio Valley Conference, the Pioneer Football League, and Division I of the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA). Additionally, the institution's Recreation and Wellness department operates an intramural program,

which includes approximately 25 team and individual sports (Morehead State University Profile 2015-2016 Book).

Statement of the Issue

Many young African American male students are enrolling in colleges; however, they are not completing their college education. Some are academically prepared, while others are underprepared. The geographic location of an institution has also negatively influenced the graduation rates of some African Americans because they are in isolated and rural areas (The Journal of Blacks in Higher Education, 2017). When African American males attend college, some can overcome the obstacles or challenges they face. Research has shown having a support network allows students to be successful in college. Having family support can influence African American males' decision to attend college and to persist. This research will look at the social and academic factors that influence African American males' persistence to graduation at a predominantly white institution (PWI) located in a rural environment. Success will be defined as completion of a bachelor's degree.

Purpose of the Study

There are numerous studies that have focused on the development of African American males and their persistence from a quantitative standpoint (Allen, 1992; Hausmann, Schofield, & Woods, 2007; Moore III, Madison-Colmore, & Smith, 2003; Strayhorn, 2008). Additionally, qualitative studies have used Critical Race Theory (CRT) as a guiding theoretical perspective (DeCuir & Dixson, 2004; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Solorzano, Ceja, & Yosso, 2000). However, few studies have used

African American Male Theory (AAMT) as a framework. African American Male Theory (AAMT) is a relatively new theory to examine African American males in a university setting. Even though CRT and AAMT are similar, there has not been significant investigation related to using AAMT methodology and how African American males are affected academically or socially. The purpose of this qualitative study is to identify social and academic factors that contribute to African American males' persistence at a predominantly white institution.

This study will allow university officials to read the narratives of African American males and gain insight into the college experiences that affected them. The results should allow best practices to be developed or allow the university to understand and address the roadblocks that impact student success. Because participants are sharing their experiences, themes can be identified and analyzed to improve campus climate, retention, student development, student persistence, and graduation rates. Even though graduation rates may increase and students may persist, factors should be identified to assist students in their pursuit of a bachelor's degree.

Significance of the Study

Stakeholders in higher education, including the federal and state entities, and other funding agencies with an investment in higher education continue to pursue improved success rates for ethnic minorities. Many states have now turned to performance funding models to hold institutions accountable for producing graduates. States are developing metrics and targets that institutions must meet in order to receive a portion of state appropriations or additional funds (National Conference of

State Legislators, 2015). One metric is the number of enrolled, retained, and graduated African American students (National Conference of State Legislators, 2015). According to the National Conference of State Legislators (2015), approximately 20 percent of states already have employed performance metrics for underrepresented minority enrollment, retention and graduation (National Conference of State Legislators, 2015).

Research Question

As research has shown, several factors affect why African American male students are not persisting to graduation (Harris III, Palmer, & Struve, 2011; Oseguera & Rhee, 2009; Strayhorn, 2014). Factors that cause African American males to drop out of college before completing their degrees must be identified and addressed.

What are some of the identified factors, both social and academic, that assist African American males to persist at a predominantly white institution located in a rural environment?

Definition of Terms

Academic Success - meeting the university's expectations for being in good standing and making satisfactory progress toward a degree (Academic Success, 2016).

African American - Descendants of African origin, and those who identify as African American. African American will be operationally defined as the student's race/ethnicity based on self-identification on his or her admissions application.

African American Male Theory (AAMT) – A theoretical framework that can be used to articulate the position and trajectory of African American boys and men in society.

Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc. - An African American service fraternity founded in 1906.

Critical race theory (CRT) – The work of progressive legal scholars of color who are attempting to develop a jurisprudence that accounts for the role of racism in American law and work towards the elimination of racism as part of a larger goal of eliminating all forms of subordination (Solorzano, 1997).

Cultural Capital – Instruments for the appropriation of symbolic wealth socially designated as worthy of being sought and possessed (DiMaggio, 1982).

DREAMS – Dedicated to the Retention, Education, and Academic Success at Morehead State (Morehead DREAMS, 2017).

First Generation - defined as neither of the student's parents having obtained a Bachelor's degree.

Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) – An institution initially created for the purpose of educating African Americans (Andersons-Goins, 2014).

M.E.N. – Mentoring Empowerment Network

MLC – Minority Leadership Caucus

NPHC – National Pan Hellenic Council

Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc. - An African American service fraternity founded in 1911.

Predominantly White Institutions (PWI) – An institution, typically founded as a single race institution, where the majority of students are Caucasian (Andersons-Goins, 2014).

Persistence – The desire and action of a student remaining in school from admission to graduation (Andersons-Goins, 2014).

Retention - The measure of student's continuance from one year to the next; high retention rates often denote student success rates (Andersons-Goins, 2014).

Retention Rate - Percentage of students who return to the same institution to continue their studies the following fall semester (NCES, 2011).

SAAC - Student-Athlete Advisory Committee is a committee that gives the student-athlete a voice within the NCAA structure.

SOAR – Student Orientation, Advising and Registration.

Summer Success Academy – MSU Summer Bridge Program a program which allows incoming freshman to take up to seven credit hours before their freshman academic year begins.

Underrepresented minority (URM) - Students who categorized themselves as a) Hispanic or Latino, b) American Indian or Alaska Native, c) Black or African American, d) Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, or e) Two or more races (Kentucky Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Policy, 2016).

Conclusion

The study adds to the literature via a qualitative approach to reveal factors that affect the social adjustment and academic persistence of a group of African American males enrolled in a rural PWI college. This study will examine literature related to the history of African Americans access to education, identity, persistence, racism, microaggression, graduation and the African American Male Theory (AAMT).

Chapter 2

Review of the Literature

History

With the Union defeat of the Confederate States of America during the Civil War, the stronghold the South had on slavery began to diminish. The United States began instituting reforms and conditions (Reconstruction) that would allow the southern states back into the Union. Reconstruction began during the Civil War, but government agencies did not plan adequately for the slavery to freedom transition for African Americans (Stubblefield & Keane, 1994). In 1865, Congress created the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen and Abandoned Lands, better known as the Freedmen's Bureau, as the primary agency to assist African Americans with attaining their political, economic, and educational rights (Stubblefield & Keane, 1994). As part of its work, the Freedmen's Bureau helped establish several training schools and colleges for African Americans. One of the main purposes for the Freedman's Bureau was to educate African Americans on how to assimilate into mainstream America and become better citizens (Richards, 2015).

Since 1865, numerous Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) have been established, allowing African American students to continue their formal education beyond high school. The first institution of higher education for blacks was established in Cheyney, Pennsylvania in 1837, and was later followed by Lincoln University established in 1854 and Wilberforce University established in 1856 (U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, 2015). Even though these

institutions were called universities or institutes, their primary missions were to provide elementary and secondary schooling for African American students who had no prior education. In 1896, the U.S. Supreme Court's decision in *Plessy v. Ferguson* established a process for there to be "separate but equal" public education (U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, 2015). This case allowed the existence of racial segregation between African Americans and Whites. The U.S. Supreme Court stated that it was acceptable for racially separate facilities to exist if they were equal and it was not a violation of the U.S. Constitution (U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, 2017). It was not until the early 1900s that HBCUs offered programs and courses at the postsecondary level (U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, 2017).

During the 1790's through the 1950's timeframe, African American students could only attend a limited number of predominantly white institutions (Caton, 2012). Not until the *Brown versus the Board of Education of Topeka* decision in 1954 were public, K-12 schools integrated (Moody, 2001). The *Brown* decision not only integrated K-12 schools, but it also desegregated the higher education academy (Harvey, Harvey, & King, 2004). Therefore, colleges and universities in the South did not grant admission to African-American students until the 1960s (U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, 2017). However, the Office for Civil Rights placed its primary compliance emphasis in the 1960s and early 1970s on the elimination of unconstitutional elementary and secondary school segregation in the South and Border States (U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights,

2017). The Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944, also known as the G.I. Bill, (which afforded educational benefits to active servicemen) was signed on June 22, 1944 by President Franklin D. Roosevelt, and offered African American males that served in the military access to educational benefits although the funding was intended to be race-neutral; the educational institutions that African Americans attended were different from those of White males (McDaniel, DiPrete, Buchmann, & Shwed, 2011).

During the 1960s, as the nation responded to the Civil Rights Act of 1964, access to higher education increased for African Americans as they attended predominantly white institutions (PWIs) (Freeman, 2002). Though African American students could attend colleges of their choice, barriers prevented these students from persisting, making progression toward graduation and completing their degrees difficult to impossible. In an ethnically diverse society characterized by socioeconomic inequality, the attainment of a college degree is important for any ethnicity (Washington, 2013). Given the history of slavery and institutional discrimination in the United States, degree attainment for African Americans can contribute to the possibility of a better quality of life. (Washington, 2013).

Although more African Americans graduate from college within a six-year time span than they did 20 years ago, the college completion gap between African American and White students remains consistent (NCES, IES, U.S. Department of Education, 2016). Between 1990 and 2000, the enrollment rate among students of color was 11.5 percent; however, their retention rates at these institutions decreased

significantly (Bettendorf, 2008). In 2006, 43 percent of African American college students graduated from college compared to 63 percent of White students (Robertson & Mason, 2008). Several factors affect a student's educational attrition: high school class ranking, academic preparation, parents' educational attainment, family income, types of financial aid (e.g., loans, grants, scholarships), and the students' ability to form mentoring relationships with faculty (Ishitani, 2006).

Identity

Race, gender, and socioeconomic status are indeed social characteristics that influence life outcomes and cannot be controlled. (Murphy, Gaughan, Hume, & Moore, 2010). With the unequal distribution of society's resources based on race and gender and the negative view of African American males, African American males' ability to access and complete college is hampered (Carnevale & Strohl, 2010). Although college athletics offers some a means to improve their life status, socioeconomic level, and provides greater opportunities, African American male college athletes perform worse academically than any of their peers (Murphy, Gaughan, Hume, & Moore, 2010).

African American parents and grandparents play a pivotal role in the socialization and identity development of African American children as they help these children to understand norms, roles, status, and expectations of the larger society (Mutisya & Ross, 2005). They teach, set moral standards, reward, discipline, and provide cultural continuity in a community (McGinn, 2001). In this way, African American parents and grandparents provide a foundation to help African American

children cope with and adjust to the racism and discrimination they will encounter. Parental involvement in racial and gender role socialization in the development of children's identity is very important to combat the negative images of the wider society. Racial socialization attempts to prepare African American children for the realities African Americans face in America (Mutisya & Ross, 2005). This is one of the reasons being taught from an Afrocentric perspective is important for African American students; it helps them understand who they are even if society does not reflect forms of validation.

As a part of African American males' validation, understanding their own culture is addressed. Afrocentric can be defined as the understanding of traditional African culture before Europe and Arab influences, and a connectedness of cultural continuity of the African diaspora, or the spreading of African people throughout the world (Mutisya & Ross, 2005). Afrocentrism's foundation stems from the cultural, historical, and philosophical traditions of African American people (Mutisya & Ross, 2005). Afrocentric relationships encompass spiritual and character values, holistic relationships, and cultural consciousness (Mutisya & Ross, 2005). African American children must learn how to live in a society that does not wholly accept them. They have been exposed to a double consciousness that of being African American and partly European American (Mutisya & Ross, 2005).

Some students are not retained due to their inability to adjust to the college environment (Strayhorn, 2010). Adapting to a different environment can be a challenge especially when the environment is different from what a person knows

from his or her lived experience. Academic achievement suggests students have competency in those areas needed to successfully integrate with the collegiate learning environment (Strayhorn, 2010). By having different social and cultural backgrounds, African Americans, however, have a different experience. Research continues to show that African American students who attend PWIs perceive their environment to be unsupportive, unsympathetic and cold (Strayhorn, 2010).

Microaggression

Given the social and economic issues facing African American males in the United States, their experiences at colleges and universities are a source of major concern for progressives that focus on the equity and inclusion of ethnic minorities in society and conservatives that focus on assimilation to ensure American progress. To address issues of equity and inclusion, microaggressions and racism emerge as impediments to African American male success because they lead to marginalization (Solorzano, 2000). Microaggressions are a manifestation of racism as the perpetrators intentionally or unintentionally make ethnic minorities feel as if they are abnormal or do not belong. An example of a microaggression leveled against African American males is when they are told they do not act like a typical African American male. Solorzano (2000) noted that racism is the belief in the inherent superiority of one race over all others where one group has a dominance over another. Microaggression influences the campus climate. Overt racism is rare in public; however, it is the covert or subtle instances where racism is not easily recognized or is obvious. Understanding social microaggressions and racism will assist colleges and universities in their

recruitment and retention of African American males by being able to recognize some of the social barriers that their students face (Solorzano, 2000).

Racial microaggressions or unconscious, and subtle forms of racism are seldom investigated (Solorzano, Ceja, & Yosso, 2000). African American students are subjected to microaggressions by the actions and statements that individuals make toward them. Often, a person of a dominant group tries to legitimize their positions or the statements they make (Solorzano, Ceja, & Yosso, 2000). Racial microaggressions are subtle forms of racism (Solorzano, Ceja, & Yosso, 2000). African American students occasionally face unconscious racism through comments made by Whites such as "When I talk about those African Americans, I'm really not talking about you," or "You are not like the rest of them" (Murphy, Gaughan, Home, & Gordon, 2010).

Some African American males are regularly subjected to microaggression (African American Males in Higher Education, 2017). Because of microaggressions and an environment that is sometimes racially hostile, it is essential for African American males to establish positive relationships with faculty (Robertson & Mason, 2008). Research has also shown that forming a positive relationship with faculty increases the students' ability to develop socially and personally (Robertson & Mason, 2008).

Audre Lorde, an African American feminist, defined racism as the belief in the inherent superiority of one race above all others and thereby the right to dominance. Her published works allowed her to voice the importance of liberation

among oppressed individuals (Audre Lorde Project, 2016). Manning Marable, who was a leading scholar of Black history and a critic of race relations and American social institutions (Grimes, 2011), defines racism as a “system of ignorance, exploitation, and power used to oppress African Americans, Latinos, Asians, Pacific Americans, American Indians and other people based on ethnicity, culture, mannerism, and color,” (Murphy, Gaughan, Hume, & Gordon, 2010). When reviewing the two definitions, these are forms of power or positioning that students of color do not have and cannot acquire. Even if African-American students at PWIs do not encounter overt and direct racism, they often experience the subtler racial microaggressions, which can be just as harmful and challenging.

Theories

Understanding and analyzing the racial climate are important to determine what factors affect college access, persistence, graduation, and transfer to and through graduation and professional schools (Murphy, Gaughan, Hume, & Moore, 2010). Critical Race Theory (CRT) is a framework that may be useful for examining how racial climate impacts the undergraduate experiences of African American students on college campuses (Murphy, Gaughan, Hume, & Moore, 2010).

Vincent Tinto's departure theory is frequently cited or debated as a framework guiding and addressing dropout and retention (Kim & Conrad, 2006). His theoretical model advances that dropout decisions or consequences are based on the interaction among students' demographic and background characteristics, goal commitment, academic system (academic integration), and social system (social integration) (Kim

& Conrad, 2006). Tinto's theory stresses that academic and social integration and goal commitment have an impact on determining if a student will leave or stay in school (Kim & Conrad, 2006). If students are retained in school, eventually they will be able to obtain their degree. One factor that Tinto's model does not consider is students' financial needs, which other researchers have identified as a major reason students withdraw (Kim & Conrad, 2006).

The individual and collective experiences of African American males exist in a symbiotic and bidirectional relationship with other beings, matter, concepts, and phenomena (Bush & Bush, 2013). AAMT provides a framework that allows one to describe and analyze the interrelated structures, systems, and process that occurs which affects and shapes the development, experiences, outcomes, and trajectory of African American boys and men (Bush & Bush, 2013). Urie Bronfenbrenner developed the ecological development theory and stated that framework was based on five systems. The environment is conceived topologically as a nested arrangement of structures which are all interconnected (Bronfenbrenner, 1976).

1. A microsystem is an immediate setting containing the learner (e.g., home, daycare center, and classroom). A setting is defined as a place, where the occupants engage in activities for a particular period of time. The factors of place, time, activity, and role constitute the elements of a setting (Bronfenbrenner, 1976).

2. The mesosystem comprises the interrelations among the major settings containing the learner at a particular point in their life (Bronfenbrenner, 1976).
3. The exosystem is an extension of the mesosystem encompassing the concrete social structures, both formal and informal, which is inclusive of the immediate settings that incorporates the learner and it influences what happens (Bronfenbrenner, 1976).
4. The macrosystems are overarching institutions of the culture or subculture, such as the economic, social, educational, legal, and political systems (Bronfenbrenner, 1976).
5. The chronosystem includes the transitions and shifts in a person's lifespan, and can include the socio-historical contexts that may influence a person (Bronfenbrenner, 1976).

The AAMT incorporates all five of Bronfenbrenner's interconnected environmental systems (Bush & Bush, 2013). AAMT affirms the uniqueness of other populations and groups, but is more focused on what makes African American males similar to other populations (Bush & Bush, 2013). AAMT examines and discovers what is distinct about this population as a group with an understanding of individualization of its members within the group (Bush & Bush, 2013).

AAMT states that the study of African American boys and men must be anchored in Africa because African culture impacts African American boys and men (Bush & Bush, 2013). To do this successfully requires that multi-disciplinary and

trans-disciplinary approaches must be applied to review how these connections are related to social sciences and humanities (Bush & Bush, 2013). Research that does not consider the impact of Africa in America runs the risk of having faulty or incomplete research (Bush & Bush, 2013).

AAMT posits that African American boys and men are born with a desire for self-determination and unlimited capacity for intellectual growth, and a sense of abiding moral principles (Bush & Bush, 2013). AAMT also embraces resilience theory and vehemently opposes deficit paradigms, thinking, and practice (Bush & Bush, 2013). It is apparent that social and educational challenges facing African American males stem from socially constructed systems rather than innate biological cultural deficiencies (Bush & Bush, 2013).

Resilience theory, which was introduced by ecologist C.S. Holling, who incorporated aspects of systems theory and ecology theory, works, well with the AAMT. Resilience theory addresses ability, capacity, and powers that people or systems exhibit that allow them to rise above adversity. AAMT is interested in discovering and illuminating the resiliency present in the inner microsystem, outer microsystem, and mesosystem (Bush & Bush, 2013).

Like the CRT, AAMT views racism as an omnipresent force in society, and is interested in how this impacts the lives of African American boys and men (Bush & Bush, 2013). The purpose of AAMT is to explicitly investigate, expose, and correct programs, policies, practices, systems, concepts, and institutions that continue to promote oppression (Bush & Bush, 2013). It is important to note that even though

AAMT analyzes phenomena, experiences, and outcomes that are pathological, deleterious, oppressive, and arresting in the lives of African American boys and men, it also has the capacity to examine why African American boys and men are resilient, healthy, and thriving (Bush & Bush, 2013).

The frameworks discussed focused on factors that can affect an African American males' persistence to their graduation. For this research study, we will use the AAMT as a relatively new theory to examine the individual and collective experiences, behaviors, outcomes of African American males and the internal and external factors that may affect them. Since there are six tenets for the AAMT, the study will only examine one of the tenets which reflects on the individual and collective experiences, behaviors, outcomes, events, phenomena, and trajectory of African American boys' and men's lives are best analyzed using an ecological systems approach. A survey will be implemented to examine the external factors that may have influenced students' persistence. Since research has stated that African American males do not progress at the same rate as other students, the research should be used to gather information related to their persistence in their college education.

Persistence

There are several pathways that students can take to complete their college degree (McDaniel, DiPrete, Buchmann, & Shwed, 2011). Many students are not prepared for college because they have not been given the tools to succeed or have not taken the necessary steps to properly prepare. After earning a high school diploma

or completing a GED, students must apply and be admitted into college, matriculate and graduate (McDaniel, DiPrete, Buchmann, & Shwed, 2011).

College selection is a factor that also affects continued persistence and the college experience (Walpole, 2008). Students with higher high school academic performance and who take college preparatory classes are more likely to graduate from college (Ewert, 2012). There are external factors that affect persistence as well, which include encouragement from family and friends, college experiences, and social involvement (Ewert, 2012).

Some African American males have intrinsic motivation that propels them toward their success and helps them socially and academically (Wright, 2009). Additionally, African American males gain higher levels of self-esteem and self-worth when they receive encouragement and have a supportive family and teachers (Wright, 2009). Regardless, models of college student persistence that include internal and external personal factors argue that students' experiences while in college shape the likelihood of their persistence to complete their degree by fostering a commitment to graduate and to a particular institution (Ewert, 2012). An observation that should be noted is that these males can excel despite societal influences and school forces that could have a negative effect on them (Wright, 2009).

An individual's culture and the environment in which he or she is raised can affect how he or she views life and/or make decisions. African American males face many obstacles as they enter college. Some are not academically prepared to do the

level of work that is expected in their classes and others may experience financial hardships that cause them to be less successful. Even though African American males face challenges and obstacles, some persevere and excel academically by finding ways to be motivated and pursue their academics.

A recent study conducted by Education Trust (2016) found that over the past decade, graduation rates for African American students improved by 4.4 percent compared to 5.6 percent for White students. However, because completion rates of African American students progressed at a slower and lower rate, the graduation gap has increased. Of the 232 institutions studied, 68.5 percent of the institutions had an African American student graduation rate increase while 31.5 percent of institutions' African American student graduation rates decreased or stayed the same.

Retention and graduation gaps between African American students and White students suggest that African American students are not gaining the knowledge, skills and competencies to be as successful as White students in the twenty-first century. Projected increases in postsecondary enrollment, specifically for African Americans and Hispanics, combined with huge gaps in retention and graduation, have increased the need for institutions to understand factors that influence student success and be more intentional about providing support to identified students (Kinzie, Gonyea, & Shoup, 2008).

According to The Learning House (2011), the issue of student retention is a major policy issue and indicator of institutional effectiveness. It has brought institutional efforts together to effectively serve and retain students through

graduation. Seidman (2005) and Collins (2011) suggest that retention percentages drastically worsen when the intersectionality of race, first-generation status and socioeconomic status are considered. Research on student retention and persistence has shown that students leave for a variety of reasons, some personal and others stemming from institutional fit (Bean, 1990; Cabrera, Castenada, Nora, & Hengstler, 1992; Peltier, Laden, & Matranga, 1999; Tinto, 1993; Willging & Johnson, 2009). Some of the most common factors identified as reasons for departure include: student background characteristics, pre-college academic experiences, structural characteristics of institution such as size, distance from home, selectivity, and lack of engagement from faculty and staff. Additionally, some studies have shown race as a significant predictor of success (Astin, 1997; Kuh, Kinzie, Buckley, Bridges, & Hayek, 2006; Murtaugh, Burns, & Schuster, 1999; Peltier, Laden, & Matranga, 1999).

Particularly for African American students, some unique barriers related to residential segregation and economic disadvantage prevent students from persisting. These barriers include academic preparation, ability to pay, and students' lack of institutional awareness (Collins, 2011). According to Nagaoka, Roderick, & Coca (2008), poor academic preparation and performance in college was a barrier to degree attainment. According to the National Assessment of Educational Progress (2015), 17 percent of African American students are not prepared for college (Petrilli, 2016).

Research suggests financial issues also serve as a barrier to degree attainment for African American students (Owens, Lacey, Rawls, & Holbert-Quince, 2010).

Particularly over the last decade, state and federal governments have continued to defund higher education, forcing institutions to raise tuition, room and board, and other fees to balance budgets. This has resulted in more of the financial burden being shifted to families, thus reducing access for students from lower socio-economic backgrounds. This creates added stress that not only affects academic performance, but also forces the student to decide whether he or she can afford to return to their institution (Li, 2010).

Lastly, research suggests students' lack of institutional awareness as a reason for African American students' attrition. Students enter institutions without the cultural capital to help them navigate institutional processes such as financial aid and access resources that help students succeed (Collins, 2011; King, 1999). Research conducted by the Pell Institute (2007) suggests that students who are exposed to student resources such as academic support and social programming are more likely to persist to the next year. This follows Tinto's (1993) belief that students who are integrated both socially and academically are more likely to persist to degree attainment (Tinto, 1993).

In recent years, a few frameworks have reviewed or analyzed the experiences of African American males in colleges and universities. Most researchers have focused on using critical race theory (CRT) (Bush & Bush, 2013). Critical race theory draws from a broad literature base in law, sociology, history, ethnic studies, and women's studies (Solórzano, Ceja, & Yosso, 2000). There are five elements that CRT focuses on:

- 1) the centrality of race and racism and their intersectionality, 2) the challenge to dominate ideology, 3) the commitment to social justice, 4) the centrality of experiential knowledge, and 5) the transdisciplinary perspective (Solórzano, Ceja, & Yosso, 2000, p.63).

The purpose of this study is to use the African American Male Theory (AAMT) to identify social and academic factors that contributed to African American males' persistence at a PWI. As an ethnic minority group, African American males have different social and cultural experiences in the United States than their White male counterparts, which means there is not one model or theory that can be used to explain the experiences of all African American males on predominantly white campuses (Wood & Palmer, 2015). In the following section, theoretical frameworks that were developed with a focus on African American males, will be examined.

Socio-Ecological Outcomes Model

The Socio-Ecological Outcomes (SEO) Model is a framework for understanding the multifaceted and interactive effects of personal and environmental factors that influence success outcomes (persistence, achievement, attainment, transfer) for African American men who have been historically underrepresented and underserved in education (Wood & Palmer, 2015). The model was an outgrowth of the five domains of African American Male Student Success in Community Colleges that Luke Woods and Frank Harris developed. The model is primarily influenced Bensimon's (2007) concepts of equity-mindedness and institutional responsibility,

which places the responsibility for student success on the institutions versus the student (Wood & Palmer 2005).

Expressions of Spirituality

Spirituality and religion influence the ways in which many individuals of African descent experience and negotiate social institutions (Wood & Palmer, 2015). There are three expressions of spirituality which assist some African Americans in coping while facing academic and social barriers (Wood & Palmer, 2015). The first expression of spirituality is resilience or religious activities such as prayer, attending religious services, and reading scriptures. These aid in Black men overcoming challenges they face such as racism, stereotypes, and stress (Wood & Palmer, 2015). The second expression of spirituality allows Black men to have a “sense of purpose, direction, and focus in life” (Wood & Palmer, 2015, p. 45). Spirituality enhances their academic pursuits, while providing men with a greater level of commitment to their academic goals (Wood & Palmer, 2015). The third expression of spirituality is religious institutional support (Wood & Palmer, 2015). African American males received personal encouragement due to their religious connections and relationships (Wood & Palmer, 2015).

Prove-Them-Wrong Syndrome

According to this theoretical framework, African American males are determined to succeed and defy stereotypes about their intellectually inferiority or inability to earn a college degree (Wood & Palmer, 2015). The Prove-Them-Wrong Syndrome framework understands resilience and how it affects African American

males' success (Wood & Palmer, 2015). The Prove-Them-Wrong Syndrome was an outgrowth of a study of 24 African American males who were majoring in engineering, and were selected due to overcoming the potential barriers in their progress in school (Wood & Palmer, 2015). The Prove-Them-Wrong Syndrome was formulated to explain the academic and social experiences, attitudes, and personality characteristics of African American males pursuing engineering degrees (Moore, Madison-Colmore, & Smith, 2003). Race is a salient and persistent force for African American males in higher education (Moore, Madison-Colmore, & Smith, 2003). African American males have a desire to further their education, so research should be conducted to examine their progression and the paths taken to be successful in higher education. The African American Male Theory is a theory that was developed specifically for African American males (or men of color).

Chapter 3

Methodology

The purpose of this qualitative study was to identify the social and academic factors that contributed to African American males' persistence at a PWI. By using a qualitative approach, the researcher was able to gather data, which reflects the unique experiences of the participants. Even though African American males attending colleges increased, their narratives and experiences are different than others. The research used qualitative methods to understand phenomenon to gain rich, contextual understanding (Hoepfl, 1997). African American male students suffer from barriers to retention; therefore, this study employed qualitative research methods to examine the factors that affect African American male students in their matriculation to graduation at Morehead State University. This chapter presents the methodology used and includes the research design, researcher biases, ethical issues, and data collection and analysis.

AAMT is a theoretical framework used to review the position and trajectory of African American boys and men in society drawn from the pre- and post-enslavement experiences (Bush & Bush, 2013). There are six tenets that are a part of this theory (Bush & Bush, 2013):

1. The individual and collective experiences, behaviors, outcomes, events, phenomena, and trajectory of African American boys' and men's lives are best analyzed using an ecological systems approach.
2. There is something unique about being male and of African descent.

3. There is a continuity and continuation of African culture, consciousness, and biology that influence the experiences of African American boys and men.
4. African American boys and men are resilient and resistant.
5. Race and racism coupled with classism and sexism have a profound impact on every aspect of the lives of African American boys and men.
6. The focus and purpose of study and programs concerning African American boys and men should be the pursuit of social justice.

Although there are six tenets that are a part of the AAMT, only one will be used. The tenet that focuses on the individual and collective experiences, behaviors, outcomes, events, phenomena, and trajectory of African American men boys' and men will be used for the purpose of this research. This tenet will be used to gather information to examine the persistence of African American males.

Research Design

The qualitative research paradigm has its roots in cultural anthropology and American sociology (Crenshaw, 2014). The intent of the research is to understand a particular social situation, event, role, group, or interaction (Crenshaw, 2014). One of the assumptions that is made related to qualitative research is that the research occurs in natural settings, where human behavior and events occur (Crenshaw, 2014). The focus of the research will also document the participants' perceptions and their experiences (Crenshaw, 2014).

In conducting the study, qualitative research methods allowed for the gathering of data to understand and represent factors contributing to African

American male persistence to graduation at a PWI. IRB approval occurred before the surveys were conducted, and participants signed informed consent forms and were aware of the purpose of the research and how their feedback would be used. The targeted population was at least ten (10) African American males who graduated from Morehead State University between the years of 2009 and 2015.

The researcher used race and gender to select the former students who would be participants of the study. Participants completed at least one full year at Morehead State University. Participants were African American male college students who graduated from the institution between 2009 and 2015. The students were graduates of one of two public regional colleges in a rural part of the state where African American males attend college. The researcher worked with Morehead State University's Development Office to obtain the contact information of African American males who graduated during the stated period of the research. Most qualitative research is collected in the field at the site where participants experience the issues or problems (Creswell, 2013). Only students that attended Morehead State University were part of the study. Data was collected in the form of survey information with open-ended questions, which would allow themes to possibly develop. Of the six tenets that are a part of the AAMT, only one was used as a part of this research study. The first tenet of the AAMT was used as a lens to evaluate participant responses. Each survey question generated addressed this tenet.

Due to the fact there are numerous social and academic factors which can impact African American boys and men, questions were developed from two other

research students, which asked participants questions related to motivation. Some factors include assessing motivation of collegiate African American males in a rural area of East Texas (Green, 2013) and persistence among African American males in the Honors College (Anderson-Goins, 2014). The questions that were developed will connect the AAMT framework to the persistence of the participants. Since the AAMT is a relative new theory, researchers have not developed a lot of studies or questions using the model. The questions developed should examine the unique experiences of the African American males that participate in the study. The questions posed to the participants sought to explore their social and academic success. Questions were developed in relation to academic success, motivational factors, a sense of identity, barriers faced, and non-academic involvement to gain a better understanding of how the participants viewed their persistence to graduation.

Survey Questions

The survey questions used were adapted from a list of questions used in two qualitative studies. They were the interview protocol for the persistence of African American males in an Honors College at the University of Southern Mississippi (Anderson-Goins, 2014) and the interview guide for assessing the motivation of collegiate African American males in a rural area of east Texas (Green, 2013). The participants were allowed three weeks to complete the survey. The purpose of the survey was to gather data to allow the students to reflect on their experiences, negative or positive, that may have affected their persistence to graduation.

Survey administered:**Demographics:**

1. In-state student or out-of-state
2. College GPA
3. How many semesters did it take you to complete your degree?

Open Ended Questions:

1. How do you as an African American male explain your academic success given the elements that impacted your life (economic, family, social, cultural)?
2. If you had to pick three motivational factors that have led to your college success, what would they be and why?
3. As a college student, how did you work towards developing a sense of who you are?
4. Barriers are challenges that can block student success. I will name barriers that are said to block the success of the African American males and I would like you to tell me how each barrier (if applicable) affected you.
 - a. Lack of financial aid
 - b. Lack of college preparation
 - c. Lack of mentoring
 - d. Lack of motivation
 - e. Lack of family support
 - f. Suffering from sense of not belonging at MSU or home
5. How had the social aspect of college (attending plays, community discussions, cultural events, etc.) impact your experience as a college student?)
6. Describe the types of effective non-academic programs that assisted you in being successful at MSU (i.e. clubs, organizations, fraternity).
7. Is there anything else that you would like to share related to your persistence at MSU or reasons that would encourage/discourage an African American male from coming to MSU?

Researcher biases

As an African American male, the researcher wanted to ensure that he considered any actual or perceived bias and worked to minimize these biases as they are identified. The researcher graduated from a historically Black college or university (HBCU), and his experiences may have been different than those of the participants. As an employee of the institution where the data will be reviewed, the researcher ensured that he remained objective to the information that was gathered, and ensured that the participants' voices were heard and reflected. The researcher did not pick participants for interviews based on how he predicted they would response to the questions in the survey or interviews.

Data Collection

Data collection was done by posing a standard set of open-ended questions to each of the 13 participants. Open-ended questions were used to ensure that each participant was asked the same questions. As data was provided, the researcher identified common patterns in the responses to the questions utilizing the SurveyMonkey tool. Anonymity was used as it related to their email addresses, their names, or any information which would allow others outside of the researcher to identify the participant. As the information was returned to the researcher, the name and information was removed so as not to tie the information back to the participants.

A SurveyMonkey survey was generated and sent to the identified graduates from a sample provided by the Morehead State University's Development Office. The researcher sent a survey to African American students who graduated from the

institution. Participants were invited to participate in a survey based on questions that were provided to participants through the SurveyMonkey online tool. The open-ended questions addressed the factors that affected the participants during their time at Morehead State University. If participants agreed to be a part of the study, an open-ended questionnaire was provided to complete, which allowed them to share their collegiate experiences.

With only nine participants completing the online survey, the researcher contacted four additional graduates to participate in the study by conducting interviews. The interview questions used were the same questions that were administered during the online survey. The researcher had access to graduates from Morehead State University's Development Office and decided to call individuals who could participate in the study. Participants were asked if they had responded to the online survey. If they did not respond to the survey, the researcher asked the participants if they could be interviewed regarding their persistence in college. The participants were sent the questions, and an established time was agreed between the participant and the researcher for an interview to be conducted. Participants could add any additional information that they might deem important about their educational experience during the interview.

Data Analysis

As a part of the qualitative research, the questions developed provided data related to demographics. The opened ended questions provided information explaining academic success, motivational factors, identity development, barriers,

social experiences, and persistence. After the data was collected from the SurveyMonkey tool and interviews were conducted, the data was coded. The researcher sorted and gathered the data based on the questions asked. The residency of the participants was documented as either in-state or out-of-state. The college GPA and semester data were averaged based on the number of responses. The open-ended questions were coded based on the questions. The researcher categorized the information for each question. If the participants provided similar information, their responses were grouped together to see if common themes could be developed. Even though the SurveyMonkey tool generated a spreadsheet for each participant, a separate Word document was created to provide all the responses from the online tool and the interviews, which allowed the data to be reviewed from an individual and/or collective perspective.

Ethical issues

In conducting this study, there were no known ethical issues identified. The researcher worked with IRB to gain permission from the university before the study was conducted. Participants were made aware of the subject matter and were provided consent forms. There were potentially no biases since the researcher is an employee of the university, and works with diverse faculty, staff, and students. As the data was collected from the questionnaire, the researcher did not alter any of the statements or responses submitted by the participants in the survey tool. If statements were made which would allow participants to be identified by others, then information was removed to still allow anonymity of the participants. The researcher

works in diversity at the institution, and the responses could assist with recruitment and retention of students.

Limitations of the study

One limitation to this study is the findings were specific to graduates at one PWI institution, Morehead State University. Another limitation was the number of participants. Though all the participants were African American males, not all have the same academic background or familial experiences. Due to the narrow scope of this study, results cannot be generalized to other populations across various PWI or postsecondary institutions.

Proposed Timeline

August 2016	Proposal Defense
August 2016	IRB Submission
September 2016	Survey development and deployment questions
November 2016	Data Analysis
January 2017	Write Capstone Chapter 4 and 5
February 2017	Write Abstract
March 2017	First and Final Drafts to Capstone Chair
March/April 2017	Submit Final Draft of Capstone Committee
December 2017	Capstone Professionally Processed
December 2017	Capstone Defense
February 2018	Format Approval through MSU
April 2018	Submit Capstone and Completion of Degree Paperwork

Chapter 4

Findings

The survey was administered on February 20, 2017. The survey, along with its statement of purpose, was sent via email to 146 African American males who were graduates of Morehead State University. Morehead State University's Development Office provided the names and email addresses of the participants. Students had to sign a consent form before they could proceed to a link, which would allow them to complete the survey. There were 10 questions that were asked of the participants and the survey was available for participants to complete over a three-week period beginning February 20, 2017 and ending on March 10, 2017. Given the results of the study (i.e. the importance of family, athletics, organizations, mentoring in persistence), the tenet most reflected was the first tenet of the AAMT model, which states the individual and collective experiences, behaviors, outcomes, events, phenomena, and trajectory of African American boys and men's lives are best analyzed using an ecological systems approach. The questions related to this tenet sought to obtain additional information from students regarding their experiences at Morehead State University. Three of the questions were related to demographics such as whether the participant was from the state of Kentucky. The participants provided their GPA at the time of graduation, and the length of time required to complete their degrees. One graduate decided not to participate in the study, but did not provide justification for his decision.

Only 13 participants completed the survey. Of the graduates who responded, 31 percent were from the state of Kentucky, and 69 percent were from out-of-state. One observation that is prevalent from the data collected in this study is the males who responded had GPAs in the range of 2.7 and 3.67, and they graduated in less than six years. The average GPA for the graduates that were surveyed was 3.12. The graduates who were surveyed completed college in an average of 4.5 years. One graduate who was surveyed was able to complete college in 3.5 years. Most colleges and universities base graduation rates on six years (Complete College America, 2013) and these participants, on average, completed their graduation in less than six years.

The first question asked was "How do you as an African American male explain your academic success given the elements that impacted your life (economically, family, socially, culturally)?" A participant stated that he had a few hurdles, but finding mentors assisted him along the way. Another stated he had issues in high school, but that he was determined to succeed and to continue working toward achieving his MBA. Family and close friends assisted one of the participants, especially since he was from out-of-state. One believed that as he grew to maturity, he was better able to handle challenges that he faced. Another participant believed that since he was in college, he should take advantage of his time there. He wanted to do well, and he wanted to do this for himself. Another participant, who viewed college as a job, was also determined to graduate. Two believed that, socially and culturally, they were prepared even though they were from two different environments (inner city and rural predominantly white town). These responses

aligned with the individual and collective experiences, behaviors, outcome, and events resiliency present in the inner microsystem and the outer microsystem. Even though one graduate grew up in a predominantly white town, he did not allow White mainstream culture to affect who he was as an individual. One may think that this is related to another AAMT tenet, which states race and racism coupled with classism and sexism have a profound impact on every aspect of the lives of African American boys and men; however, since the graduate did not state that he had faced racism, it cannot be deduced that it falls in line with the tenet. Another explained his success as being accountable for his own actions. There were no financial factors that he had to overcome because his parents could not afford his tuition, but he was able to receive financial aid. Another participant explained that his academic accomplishment was achieved through guidance, faith, and support. Based on the AAMT this demonstrates his success was a component of the inner microsystem (personality), outer microsystem (family support, guidance), and subsystem (faith).

According to J. Wilson (personal communication, March 31, 2017), "every student, I believe, experiences a rough path during their journey. I lost a very close friend to cancer; experienced financial struggle and riffs with my family, but without those four factors (economic, family, social, cultural), the impact of the obstacles would have turned my accomplishment of success into a debacle of turmoil." Some other factors that propelled him to be successful and motivated were being involved in the DREAMS Mentoring Program; sustaining the requirements to retain his athletic scholarship; and meeting the academic requirements to apply and remain in

his (radiology) program. He also shared that after completing his first semester and being away from home, he realized he was situated in an unfamiliar environment. He joined organizations that best identified with who he was as an individual. He stated (J. Wilson, personal communication, March 31, 2017), "This projected me to develop and grow into the person I am today. I became a contributing member of my athletic team, DREAMS Mentoring Program, M.E.N., and Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc. I was able to grow and not only find himself, but invest and bring what I had to offer to these organizations as well." M.E.N. is a mentoring program that is geared specifically for men of color. One participant stated that his academic success was based on holding himself accountable as to whether he wanted to go to college. There were no motivational factors to overcome (R. Cooper, personal communication, April 5, 2017). Due to his parents being unable to afford his tuition, he received financial aid as well as scholarships to pay for it. He did not see being an African American male as a disadvantage while attending Morehead State University. He had heard some rumors of ethnic conflicts, but it never interfered with his goals, although he felt it may have affected other students. He believed that attending college and involvement in sports was ultimately a path towards better living conditions than those from which he had come. Because he received the financial assistance, finances were not an issue; therefore, he was able to persist. Another participant stated he depended on himself and not others. One participant stated that he believed he could be successful in college by concentrating on completing school and competing in sports.

Next, participants were asked to choose three motivating factors and how those factors led to their college success. The top four factors were: motivation, family, mentors, and football. Nine stated that family motivated them. They wanted to ensure their family was proud of them, or it was because of their upbringing and a desire to be employed. Six stated they were motivated to be successful by noting the sacrifice others had made for them; or by the desire to change the economics of their households. Mentoring and football were important to three participants as it allowed them to connect with others to help them be successful.

One of the participants that was interviewed wanted to do well and he wanted to do this for himself. The three factors that were important to him were his faith, family, and football. He looked at the big picture and saw the sacrifice of his family. He believed that since he was in college he should take advantage of his time there. One participant stated that by staying focused on God, family and football it allowed him to stay focused on being successful. R. Harden (personal communication, April 7, 2017) stated, "I wouldn't be where I am without those three things. It is always good to have something to focus on in order to reach your academic success."

The next question asked was "As a college student, how did you work towards developing a sense of who you are?" One participant challenged himself both in and out of the classroom. Another participant from out-of-state believed that by living on his own and learning from his own experiences, good and bad, he was able to understand more about who he was as an individual. Another participant realized a sense of himself by attending college out-of-state and living in a different

environment. Participating in the Minority Leadership Caucus (MLC), NPHC, his fraternity, working the Student Orientation, Advising, and Registration (SOAR) events and being a peer coach demonstrated that campus activities were important. Having friends assisted another participant in his growth. Being a part of the martial arts team exposed a participant to different people, philosophies, and practices. Another participant shared that he wanted to be a good influence on everyone with whom he came in contact. Three participants believed playing football allowed them to develop a sense of who they were, but also allowed them to be able to connect with others by being part of a team.

There are barriers that can block student success. A list of barriers was identified and the participants provided responses related to financial aid, college preparation, mentoring, motivation, family support, or if they suffered from a sense of not belonging or wanting to be home. Only seven participants stated that financial aid was a barrier; they either received scholarships or obtained loans. When it came to college preparation, two of the participants attended a community college before they attended Morehead State University. Four participants stated they were not prepared academically for college classes.

One shared when asked the question that he felt he was prepared academically, but he did not feel that he was prepared socially for college. He was from out-of-state, accustomed to a more diverse population and a larger city; therefore, he was not prepared for being in Morehead. He felt this affected his religion, culture, and demographics because there were few African Americans. The

graduate shared that the lack of family support was a slight impact—although his family was mostly supportive of his choice to go away to school and pursue his academics, his mother was torn because he was the eldest and was so far from home. His mother was aggressive in encouraging him to transfer, which he almost did after his first year, but he stayed motivated to continue at Morehead State. His biggest challenge was being away from home in a rural area, and living in a way that he was not accustomed; it was difficult (J. Wilson, personal communication, March 31, 2017). He shared that he was homesick during his four years of college. He did not go out of his dorm unless it was to class or to practice. He felt that he was on a team that judged him to be a gangbanger. He also experienced racial slurs from his teammates, and did not feel like he belonged at the school. He withdrew into a shell.

Thirty percent of the students indicated that they did not have mentors, and the other seventy percent of the students stated that they had mentors. Two participants were part of the DREAMS mentoring program, and one had an informal campus mentor. One participant stated that time management was a barrier for him. Also, he did not utilize the resources that were available to him or reach out to others, even when help was needed. Financial aid was beneficial to him. What he is most proud of is his maturing from being a kid to young adulthood. He was prepared academically from high school, but initially, got caught up in “partying”. What motivated him was his will to succeed because he knew what job he wanted and what he had to do to obtain that job.

Thirty percent implied there was a lack of family support. Another participant stated that a more appropriate word would be "absence" since his mother passed away during his senior year in high school, and he and his father had a continued strained relationship: "There was no support outside of my wife during my college years. (Unknown, personal communication, March 1, 2017)" As far as suffering from a sense of belonging or from being away from home, only one participant expressed that Morehead did not cater to the needs of minority students, especially on the weekends when everyone else went back home. Another mentioned that it had no effect on him because he attended online.

Participants were also asked if having participated in social aspects of the campus impacted their college experience. The participants shared that attending cultural programs hosted by the university was beneficial to them. Another participant stated that having the diversity in nationalities on campus helped him learn about other cultures. One student also shared that by being involved, socially, he became the man he is today. He was placed in a position where he needed to lead as well as follow. Participants were asked to describe the types of effective non-academic programs that assisted their success. Three participants stated that the football team created a brotherhood that will last forever for them. Participation in intramural sports was helpful as an out-of-class experience as well. Others stated that being part of a fraternity was important to them.

The last question asked of the participants was if there was any further insight they wanted to share related to persistence at MSU, or if there were any reasons they

would encourage or discourage an African American male considering MSU. The following is input that was shared from the participants. One participant said he “would encourage students to get involved in campus activities. He enjoyed his time in school, and he had good experiences when doing projects with classmates. While my time was different than many others.” Another participant “hoped it was representative of what others have experienced.” Having the “opportunity to meet and be mentored” was an important factor as well for a participant. He believed that his mentor, “trusted him, and assisted him to stay on track and to ensure that he was doing things appropriately besides just playing sports.” One participant encouraged future students to “come for the small class size and the attention given by professors, and to come motivated, but also get a mentor.” Mentorship is important for all youth, but especially black youth. He believed, “it takes motivation to be successful.” Although many of the students lack motivation, mentors can help students see and understand where they can find the motivation within themselves. Another participant believed that “college is what you make it” and “you must get involved if you want something to change. You need to plan and understand the program that you are studying. (R. Cooper, personal communication, April 5, 2017)” Having a plan and being aware of any progress can positively aid with persistence in college.

Another participant shared the following information. Although he felt that his time at MSU was fulfilling, he believed that the climate of the school was only inviting for White students. He appreciated the small classroom sizes because it made for personable spaces, but the campus climate seemed to be divided between those

from in-state versus out-of-state students. There were not enough activities throughout the week to promote social networking, making it difficult for students to want to stay over the weekend. He also felt by the school being a predominantly white school that at times the campus did not appreciate individuals that may have been from other races. He believed a reason that might discourage others from attending was that although many athletes at Morehead State University were African American, they received little to no support from the student body. Another participant felt that Morehead State University would shape African American males to be the men that could motivate others to be successful and assist them with real world experience. Another participant stated that MSU was an eye opener for him because of the location of the school. He would recommend the institution to others because he believed that by being different from the majority of students, it allowed the campus to become more diversified. One participant stated how he was not allowed to participate in sports because of being placed on academic probation. After this occurred, his GPA was not lower than a 3.0 each semester following.

Chapter 5

Conclusions, Actions, and Implications

Chapter 4 presented the voices of participants. This chapter shows how the voices of the participants connect with the AMMT model and the tenet used to demonstrate the persistence of the African American males in the study. The chapter also reflects the conclusion, and the next steps of the study. This study examined the persistence of thirteen African American collegiate males who graduated from Morehead State University. The researcher examined some of the elements that impacted the participants' success in relation to economics, family, social, academic and cultural experiences. The researcher also examined motivating factors, which propelled the participants toward their completion to graduation. It is while in college that students often develop their sense of identity, and the participants provided information on how/when that was accomplished. The researcher also provided a list of barriers, and the participants provided input on the barriers that affected them.

This study examined the social and academic factors that affected the persistence to graduation of African American males who attended a rural university. The study took place in a rural university in Eastern Kentucky. The information that students provided will be helpful for the current institution, and may be helpful to other colleges and universities that African American males attend.

All the graduates interviewed were out-of-state students. The participants expressed they all had hurdles to cross, but they did not allow those hurdles to deter

their success. They felt it was beneficial to have a mentor, a community, and determination, all of which helped them become academically successful. There was a strong emphasis on mentoring from the participants in the survey. They shared a strong desire to connect or have someone provide guidance along the way. There were three factors they believed led them to their college success. They were determination, motivation and family. Determination is a prevalent trait in African American males, creating within them a desire to complete their college degree. They were motivated by economic pressures and seeing the sacrifice of others, and their motivation was reinforced by their families and their own awareness of being part of a community with family members or close friends.

When one of the graduates that interviewed stated that he had heard of some ethnic conflicts, which he knew existed, he did not let the conflicts stop him from persisting forward. He had the ability, capacity and power necessary to rise above adversity (Bush & Bush, 2013). Aligning with the AAMT model, the graduates shared the inner microsystem (personality), outer microsystem (family, peers,) subsystem (collective will), and mesosystems (interactions between the subsystem, inner microsystem, and outer microsystems). Some of the graduates shared they had the courage to do well and be successful as an African American male.

This study was only a snapshot of how African American males felt about their experiences at Morehead State University. If graduation rates and persistence of African American male students are to improve, there is a need on campus to help African American males connect with others. If these young men are able to connect

with others, they might more readily identify resources that could help them persist in college. Some of the graduates in this study stated that being involved in a fraternity or on a football team inspired them to continue pushing forward toward obtaining their degrees. By being connected to a brotherhood, it allowed them to illuminate the resiliency present in the outer microsystem (extended family, peer groups) (Bush & Bush, 2013). Having their family's support also contributed to their being motivated, whether it was in the classroom or outside the classroom. To continue this study, one method could examine the results of students who lived on campus and connect it with a different tenet.

This study sought to support and add to the literature related to African American Male Theory (AAMT). I have a strong desire to see all students succeed, but I have an even greater desire to see African American males graduate. Since there is not much research associated with the AAMT, this study will be able to contribute towards the literature.

Resilience is defined as the capacity for persistence, creativity, emotional intelligence, grit, cognitive flexibility, risk-taking, agency, adapting to change, delaying gratification, learning from failure, and questioning success (Resilience Consortium, 2017). Persistence refers to the act of continuing towards an educational goal (Postsecondary Retention and Persistence: A Primer, 2017). From the data that was collected from the survey, the African American males expressed that they were motivated, determined, had the support of family, mentors, and were involved with

campus activities. Majority of the students in this study had to adjust from an urban area to a rural setting.

From the feedback gathered from this study, some African American males rejected how White mainstream culture perceived African Americans and oppression. The participants were determined to complete their education. Most colleges and universities base their graduation rates on a six-year completion (Complete College America, 2013). The participants in this study who provided feedback on average completed their degree in less time, which reflects their determination and motivation to obtain an education. They did not allow living in a rural area to prevent them from achieving their goals. They recognized that mentoring and connecting with others, such as through an athletic team or fraternity, aided their determination to persist. By being part of an organization, the graduates felt compelled to compete against one another while showing support for others of their peer group.

The graduates did not experience many academic challenges because of the support they received from their family or their spouse. One recognized the importance of persistence to gain employment. Another even stated that obtaining a college degree would allow him to be better able to take care of his daughter. None of the participants believed racial perceptions inhibited them because, as one graduate posed, this was a societal norm in general.

An important observation was made as it relates to the persistence of the African American males and how they can connect this to the African American Male Theory. For the most part, only three factors identify as external factors motivating

the participants: campus environment, family members, and mentors encouraging them along the way. The remainder of the responses that allowed the graduates to persist toward success were internal factors.

One participant said he gained motivation from what some would term the "Prove-Them- Wrong" theory; however, we could opine that his motivation was more related to the AAMT because he also wanted to make a change for his family.

Another graduate shared how he wanted to prove to others that the perception about African American males was not correct. One might think that this would be a part of the Prove-Them-Wrong Syndrome, however, there are four primary components of the theory (Wood & Palmer, 2013) which refer to a structural condition, affective disposition, intended outcome, and affective response (Wood & Palmer, 2013). Based on the limited data pulled from the survey questions, a determination could not be made that it is part of this framework. Several young men expressed how their faith was a factor in their motivation and how this was used to keep them focused and provided them with a sense of direction. This factor allowed them to show their persistence through the Expression of Spirituality Model.

The AAMT is a conceptual framework that describes and analyzes the interrelated structures, systems, and processes that occur in the dynamic and multidimensional environments that influence and share in the development, experiences, outcomes, and trajectory of African American boys and men (Bush & Bush, 2013). The African American males that were part of this research were from different locations, and had different support structures in place to assist them. They

did not allow outside factors to inhibit them from being successful. They faced obstacles, but they continued to persist and make progress toward their education.

How to further this study

Based on the information received as feedback from the graduates there are a few paths that could be taken to analyze more information. There was one graduate who identified himself as an online student. Since the assumption was made that the students would be affected by social and academic activities in their persistence, on-line students may be at a disadvantage by not having the connections of a fraternity or being part of a team as a support system to be successful. Another aspect that could be analyzed is a comparison of the persistence of students who started at MSU as freshmen, with information of students who transferred from community college or other institutions.

Some of the graduates stated they believed their determination to persist to graduation was due to having a mentor help them throughout their college experience. A way to further this study could be to investigate the experiences of graduates who had mentors versus those who did not have a mentor and evaluate how this impacted their persistence to graduate.

As part of the study for this capstone, one of the tenets of the African American Male Theory was used. Since the AAMT is a theoretical framework used to articulate the position and trajectory of African American boys and men in society (Bush & Bush, 2013), how would any of the other tenets show or demonstrate the

persistence of African American males in higher education? There would be five others from which to choose.

Closing statement

AAMT is specifically concerned with examining and discovering what is distinctive about African American males as a group by understanding individual distinctions within the group (Bush & Bush, 2013). It is impressive that African American males are attending college in greater numbers; however, programs need to be in place to monitor students' progress and better support persistence to graduation. If African American males are not sufficiently prepared academically, some level of instruction and effort is necessary to support their progress to degree attainment. They could be placed in an informal or formal mentoring program where the mentor would be responsible for monitoring their progress. Successful peer mentoring at universities has been attributed to increased relationships among instructors, students, and mentors (Colvin & Ashman, 2010). Developing best practices to mentor in cross-cultural environments have been beneficial to students as well as faculty members (Crutcher, 2007).

MSU DREAMS is a mentoring program targeted for the recruitment and retention of underrepresented students. MSU DREAMS program encourages persistence for students who have enrolled in the program to continue towards graduation. The program is considering a four-year option to track students as a way of closing the achievement gaps. This would allow African American males to be a

part of a program that allows them to support, encourage, and challenge each other to persist in their education.

This would also help to ensure that if African American males are not staying with their academic coursework, a support group is implemented that allows them to assist one another, and provide supplemental materials to them so that they are receiving the necessary instructions in their classes. Another example would be to create an environment which motivates and engages the student in learning opportunities. The state of Kentucky's legislative body has just approved performance funding, and there will be some funds allocated to the progression of students of color (Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education, 2016). In order to receive their base funding, institutions will need to ensure they meet their targeted performance objectives.

As a part of performance funding, institutions will be required to improve their undergraduate enrollments for underrepresented students (URM) and low-income students. Higher Education institutions will be required to improve their graduate enrollment as well for URM students. Six-year graduation rates for first-time full-time baccalaureate degree students will be a part of their performance metrics. Workforce diversity for URM tenured and tenured track faculty will be a part of the plan as well. First to second year retention for URM and low-income students will be assessed as well (Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education, 2016).

A college education can change the dynamics of a person's life. It is through education that opportunities exist, some students will not achieve them if they fail to

graduate. In this study, we see that mentoring, determination, and a support system were important for the participants (Ingram, Williams, Coaxum, Hilton, & Harrell, 2016). Seventy percent of the graduates stated that they had a mentor. Three surveyed participants had mentors. Of the students interviewed, two shared they had mentors and believed it was important for them in their progression in college. This demonstrated the need for them to have a connection on campus as a support resource. When students feel that they have a connection to a place, they do well and thrive (Roval, 2002). If the students are doing well and thriving, this would allow one to review the position and trajectory of the students. For students to be successful, there needs to be an innate desire for self-determination (Bush & Bush, 2013), which allows them to rise above adversity through mentorship and being connected to a team. African American males show their resilience and persistence to achieve and demonstrate a need to reject what White mainstream may think of them.

Now What

African American males are furthering their education by attending colleges and universities. If institutions are concerned with ensuring that their students are persisting and progressing toward graduation, a focus will need to remain on all ethnic groups and genders. The study outlined that there are some barriers that these African American males face while in college, but it also showed there are factors that impel them to be successful. Having family, peers, and mentors were important for these participants.

The state legislature has passed laws that will allocate part of a university's base funding to the performance of all their students with graduation rates and retention rates, while closing the gaps between underrepresented minority students and majority students. To receive that funding, MSU will need to ensure that programs are in place to break or remove barriers, but also that structures are in place that allow African American males to be persistent toward their graduation. MSU should also create spaces where African American males can bond with each other and especially for males who may not be a part of a team, fraternity, or student group.

The young men who were part of this study shared their narratives on how they were able to be successful, but we know that the research states there are more who have not been retained for various reasons. If institutions initiate formal processes to ensure the success of their students, then their graduation, retention, and progression rates should increase. Aligning with the tenets of the AAMT, it is a model that can be used to evaluate the persistence of African American males and determine their success as they continue to pursue their education. Institutions must be willing to also ensure that barriers do not exist that impede African American males' academic, social, and personal development and growth. An African American Initiative was developed as a part of an independent study, and will be shared with the Morehead State University's president.

Summary

As the AAMT asserts, the individual and collective experiences, behaviors, outcomes, events, phenomena, and trajectory of African American males' lives are

best analyzed using an ecological systems approach. When examining African American males' persistence to college graduation, an ecological support system contributed to their success. According to the participants in this study, joining a sports team or other group, engaging with a mentor, and having encouraging family members all contributed to the African American males graduating from college in fewer than six years. Even though the participants did encounter barriers, these challenges did not hinder them from achieving their respective degrees and being successful as it relates to college coursework. The participants were academically ready for college and this readiness also contributed to their success.

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Appendix A:**Letter to participants:**

Hello,

My name is Charles Holloway, I am the Chief Diversity Officer at Morehead State University, and also a doctoral candidate in the College of Education. The focus of my doctoral research is the persistence of African American males who attend a predominantly white institution in the south.

African American males face several challenges in obtaining a college education. In the past, very few opportunities existed for African Americans to obtain an education outside of a historically black college and/or university (HBCU). In the 1960s, numerous predominantly white institutions (PWIs) opened their doors and African American students were permitted to enroll; this provided additional options for college attendance.

African American males are being admitted to college; however, they are not retained and do not graduate at the same rates as their white male and female or black female peers. Cultural and social factors affect the retention, persistence and graduation of African American male students. The purpose of this study is to identify the social and academic factors that assist African American males in their persistence while attending a predominantly white institution (PWI).

I plan to focus my research on black males who attended Morehead State University (MSU). I am gathering data on African American male students who attended the institution between 2009 and 2015. I will be analyzing the data gathered using a relatively new theory, the African American Male Theory (AAMT). More specifically, I am using one of its tenets to address the persistence of African American males. The tenet provides a lens to evaluate the resilience and persistence of African American males. It is apparent that social and educational challenges facing African American males stem from socially constructed systems rather than innate biological or cultural deficiencies.

The information you provide will be confidential and anonymous. I have setup a survey using Surevey Monkey to capture responses seven (7) demographic questions and eleven (11) open ended questions. The completion time will vary depending on the amount of information you choose to provide. I would appreciate you taking the time to complete the survey. The survey will remain active for three (3) weeks. If you are interested in participating in the survey, please let me know and I will forward you a link to the survey.

If you have any questions or concerns, you may reach me at c.holloway@moreheadstate.edu or 859-312-5965.

Respectfully,

Charles Holloway, Doctoral Candidate

Appendix B:

African American Male Persistence Questionnaire:

Please answer the following questions:

Demographics:

1. In-state student
2. Out-of-state student
3. College GPA
4. How many semesters did it take you to complete your degree?
5. The year you started at MSU?
6. The year you completed MSU?
7. Major

Open Ended Questions:

8. How do you as an African American male explain your academic success given the elements that impacted your life (economic, family, social, cultural)?
9. If you had to pick three motivational factors that have led to your college success, what would they be and why?
10. As a college student, how did you work towards developing a sense of who you are?
11. What are some of the perceptions from society about African American college men?
12. Barriers are challenges that can block student success. I will name barriers that are said to block the success of the African American males and I would like you to tell me how each barrier (in applicable) affected you.
 - g. Lack of financial aid
 - h. Lack of college preparation
 - i. Lack of mentoring
 - j. Lack of motivation
 - k. Lack of family support
 - l. Suffering from sense of not belonging at MSU or home

13. What do you think would discourage an African American male from coming to MSU?
14. How had the social aspect of college impacted your experiences as a college student?
15. Describe the types of effective non-academic programs that assisted you in being successful at MSU (i.e. clubs, organizations, fraternity)
16. Describe how MSU addressed barriers in order to encourage the success of African American males.
17. How did your home environment affect your motivation to be successful at MSU?
18. Is there anything else that you would like to share related to your persistence at MSU?

Appendix C:

African American Male Profile at Morehead State University
(From MSU Profile Books 2008 – 2015)

Year – Fall data	Undergraduate Headcount	Graduate Headcount	Total
2008	121	22	143
2009	124	18	142
2010	127	20	147
2011	155	24	179
2012	167	24	191
2013	160	18	178
2014	176	21	197
2015	160	16	176

VITA

CHARLES HOLLOWAY

EDUCATION

December 1986	Bachelor of Science Alcorn State University Lorman, Mississippi
December 1991	Master of Business Administration Xavier University Cincinnati, Ohio
Pending	Doctor of Education Morehead State University Morehead, Kentucky

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCES

August 2009 - Present	Chief Diversity Officer Morehead State University Morehead, Kentucky
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